

**ERIE-NIAGARA REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP**  
INSTITUTE FOR LOCAL GOVERNANCE AND REGIONAL GROWTH  
UNIVERSITY AT BUFFALO  
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Co-Chairs:

Hon. Clyde Burmaster  
Hon. Barry Weinstein, MD

Minutes of Erie-Niagara Regional Partnership Meeting  
October 1, 2004

Members:

James Allen  
Meredith Andreucci  
Hon. Vince Anello  
G. Michael Brown  
Drew Cerza  
Jody Clark  
Hon. Elise Cusack  
Hon. William Davignon  
Hon. Albert DeBenedetti  
Tim Doolittle  
Hon. Wright Ellis  
Matthew Enstice  
Samuel Ferraro  
Richard Geiger  
Celeste Lawson  
Maria Lehman  
Hon. Peter McMahon  
Hon. Gerald Meal  
Hal Morse  
Hon. Sean O'Connor  
Dr. Gary Praetzel  
F. Tim Reese  
David Rosenwasser  
Laurence Rubin  
Diane Ruzala  
Laura St. Pierre  
Hon. Mark Schroeder  
Hon. Demone Smith  
Hector Titus  
Timothy Wanamaker  
Charles Webb  
Peter Wendel

**Present:** Burmaster, Weinstein, Allen, Ellis, Ferraro, Lehman, Meal, Morse, O'Connor, Reese, Ruzala, St. Pierre, Titus, Webb (proxy), Wendel, Casale, Ross, Sheffer, Witul

**Excused:** Andreucci, Anello, Clark, Lawson, Praetzel, Rosenwasser, Schroeder, Holt

**Absent:** Brown, Cerza, Cusack, Davignon, DeBenedetti, Doolittle, Enstice, Geiger, McMahon, Rubin, Smith, Wanamaker

The meeting was called to order at 8:35 a.m. by Erie-Niagara Regional Partnership Co-Chairs Clyde Burmaster and Barry Weinstein, MD. The Co-Chairs welcomed new DuPont Chemical Solutions Enterprise Plant Manager F. Tim Reese.

Minutes of the July, 2004 meeting were approved.

Subcommittee Chair Hector Titus presented the Economic Development Subcommittee report. The report was received and filed. Titus noted that the Small Business Assistance Steering Committee chose to issue a Solicitation for Proposals for the development and construction of the website, finding it desirable to offer the chance for a small business to work on our small business project. ENRP Administrator Tod A. Kniazuk detailed the timeline for awarding of the contract; SFP responses due on October 20, committee review and recommendation on November 17, and ENRP action at the December 3 general meeting.

Kniazuk presented the Government Affairs Subcommittee report. The report was received and filed.

Kniazuk presented the Tourism & Culture Subcommittee report. The report was received and filed, with **approval granted to invite Albert Nocciolino to be our keynote speaker at the first 2005**

Ad Hoc:

Michael Casale  
Hon. George Holt, Jr.  
Hon. William Ross  
John Sheffer, II  
Lawrence Witul

Administrator:

Tod A. Kniazuk

**general meeting.** We will hear first hand from an “outsider” who brings events to our area on his experiences, our strengths, and our challenges as a region in developing tourism and effectively conveying our message to those inside and outside the area.

Subcommittee Chair Hal Morse presented the Transportation Subcommittee report. The report was received and filed. Morse noted that the public transportation/job access project should be ready for ENRP action at the December general meeting.

ENRP Member Samuel Ferraro gave a presentation on the Niagara County Center for Economic Development and its website [www.nccedev.com](http://www.nccedev.com). Over the past six months the NCIDA and Planning Department have been putting this together, resulting in a one-stop shop for economic development in the county, a combined website, and a new logo. As part of this one-stop shop the partnerships between the three IDAs (Niagara County, Town of Lockport, Town of Niagara) have been solidified both financially and substantively. New printed materials and a cd are also being produced.

Features of the website include information about financial assistance, permits, market facts, quality of life, and resources. There is also a site locator feature that includes sites, buildings, brownfields, foreign trade zones, and virtual site tours.

In conjunction with the website and printed materials, staff is implementing an aggressive marketing effort with direct mail, and personal visits in the US and Southern Ontario.

Co-Chair Burmaster inquired about the completeness of information on the site; in other words, could someone learn all they need to know from the website without making any other contact with the Center? Ferraro explained that the approach was to offer a good amount of information on the site while still maintaining personal contact with the user.

Co-Chair Weinstein asked how much the site cost, which Ferraro replied was \$25,000. Weinstein also asked about staffing for the Center, which is 14 shared between the NCIDA and Planning Department.

ENRP Ad Hoc Member John Sheffer noted that the Center has been good about connecting to other tools like the Western New York Regional Information Network (WNYRIN).

Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority Director of Aviation William Vanacek began the "two-way presentation" on the Niagara Falls International Airport (NFIA) by giving an update on the airport. Work continues on the design of the new terminal, with designs presented to the NFTA Board. A "flowing river" design was chosen. Features of the new terminal will include two jet bridges and ground landing. Design will be completed in January, 2005 with construction beginning that April and "beneficial occupancy" in November, 2005.

The total cost is \$30 million; \$23 million for the terminal, \$4.8 for apron improvements, and \$2.1 for roadways and parking. The funding package is being worked up, with potential funding coming from – among others – the NFTA, the NCIDA, casino revenue, the federal government, and bonding.

Vanacek continued that the NFTA is gauging interest in the NFIA's uses. There seems to be an interest in cargo, but to effectively do cargo we need to make sure we have the proper facilities in place. At a conference on leisure-based travel the NFTA found that people seem to still view Niagara Falls as the falls and not much else, so we need to better communicate our tourist message. Other concerns and observations were the perceived difficulty in international travel to Canada – it wasn't well known that the NFIA can process international travelers. Some thought the NFIA was in Canada.

ENRP can help, according to Vanacek, by building awareness (especially outside of the region), by working on cross border issues, and by issuing letters of support to use in the NFTA's marketing efforts.

ENRP Ad Hoc Member Michael Casale asked if it was challenging to pitch the tourism aspect of air travel as 85 to 90 percent of our visitors come by car. Vanacek replied that it is, but that we have to capture some long-distance travel to be successful.

Co-Chair Burmaster asked for clarification that the new terminal would be open in November, 2005. It will, according to Vanacek, provided the funding package comes through as planned. Co-Chair Weinstein inquired when the NFTA would know about the funding. Vanacek replied that he does not know, and that State Senator George Maziarz is "carrying the ball." ENRP Member Peter Wendel asked for the deadline for funding to meet their desired timetable; that deadline

is March, 2005. Maziarz seems confident that this deadline can be met, according to Vanacek.

Co-Chair Weinstein asked what will happen to the existing terminal. It will remain open during construction, then the NFTA will look at its options. It could be used for private jets to service high rollers coming to the casino, or it could process light parcel or cargo that arrives with passenger flights.

Co-Chair Weinstein explained to Vanacek that the goal of this meeting was to hear an update on the NFIA, but also for the NFTA to hear about relevant regional projects and how the NFIA fits into them. ENRP wants to make sure that all parties are aware of the interconnectedness between efforts. With that, Weinstein turned the meeting over to the ENRP presenters.

Ferraro gave an update on the Framework for Regional Growth [www.regionalframework.com](http://www.regionalframework.com) explaining that it is region-wide and that access to transportation is integral. To that end, the NFIA plays a key part. The final product is expected either at the end of this year or in early 2005.

Ferraro also gave an update on power relicensing <http://niagara.nypa.gov> which as he put it, "affects everything." Settlement negotiations are down to the "nitty gritty," and there will be a settlement package by January, 2005. Military installations are a tie-in to this, and we need to make sure that Niagara Falls is kept off the 2005 closure list. NFTA has come up with a new plan that decreases costs for the base.

ENRP Member James Allen gave an update on the Regional Economic Development Strategy (REDS). Allen noted that at the last meeting he said that it appeared the ECIDA was not going to contract for the cluster analysis as they said they would, and so ENRP voted to encourage the UB Institute for Local Governance and Regional Growth (ILGRG) to do one instead. It now appears that ECIDA will indeed contract for the analysis, and so things are moving forward. In terms of a tie-in to the NFIA, both tourism and logistics are identified as regional clusters. The plans for the NFIA fit well into the REDS.

Jo Nasoff of the ECIDA (proxy for ENRP Member Charles Webb) noted that they contracted with Development Research Partners out of Denver for the cluster analysis and are currently negotiating the scope of work. The next step is to figure out how their work will mesh with

the work being done at the ILGRG. ENRP Member Laura St. Pierre added that the analysis is on a six month time frame.

Wendel noted that there are two possible approaches to the cluster analysis; what we have now, or what we want to have in the future. Nasoff replied that two definite sectors will be life sciences and advanced manufacturing. The firm will then identify some additional clusters that make sense.

Allen explained that this cluster analysis “won’t slow us down.” The ECIDA’s efforts can continue even after our effort. They are looking at the depth of clusters (or sub-clusters), where we have already identified our five – life sciences, advanced manufacturing, tourism, logistics, and back office. Now we need to see what those clusters need to be successful.

Sheffer gave an update on the Buffalo Niagara Cultural Tourism Initiative (BNCTI), saying there is “enormous synergy” between the BNCTI and the activity at the NFIA. As more people are brought into the area it can only help. The BNCTI is based on experience clusters, and of course the falls is one. Sheffer added that developing transportation is critical, and that our assets being visitor ready can in turn help the NFTA sell the NFIA and the region. The BNCTI report was recently approved unanimously by the steering committee; it will next be presented to the stakeholders and then rolled out later this year.

Morse explained the tie-in between the NFIA and the previously detailed (in the Transportation report) public transportation/job access project, noting that the NFIA is within the Niagara County pilot area, and therefore we are already developing service improvements for the area around the airport.

Morse concluded the presentation by giving an update on bi-national planning, asserting that much has happened in the two years since the Harris-Pataki summit. The stage is being set for action, and this discussion has given Morse some points to be brought up about ease of crossing.

There was no old business.

Under new business, ENRP Member Maria Lehman brought up the expected job action by the Canadian union that does customs and immigration, and specifically the possible shutdown of the Lewiston

bridge in that job action. Parking allowances are being made on this side of the border.

Also under new business, Co-Chair Burmaster presented a proclamation from Niagara County to John Sheffer on the occasion of his retirement as executive director from the ILGRG, Co-Chair Weinstein recognized Allen on the occasion of his 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary at the Amherst IDA, and Kniazuk invited all on behalf of ENRP Member Gary Praetzel to the Niagara University College of Hospitality and Tourism Management convocation.

Co-Chair Weinstein noted the change of location for the December meeting to the Niagara Falls Bridge Commission, and also noted that there will be a tour of the facility following the meeting.

The Co-Chairs thanked the group for their attendance and input, and the meeting was adjourned at 9:57 a.m.

Submitted by Tod A. Kniazuk  
November 24, 2004